From R. R. Lloyd,

THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEN OF WEALTH TO CHRISTIAN INTERESTS AND INSTITUTIONS IN OUR COUNTRY.

A SERMON

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BY

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SERMON.

OBLIGATIONS OF MEN OF WEALTH.

CAN YE NOT DISCERN THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES? *Matt.* xvi: 3.
TO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL MUCH BE REQUIRED. *Luke* xii: 48.

GRATEFUL for the opportunity of standing here and having some share in the advantage of a clearer vision and a quickened fellowship and a freshly aroused enthusiasm to be derived from active participation in a great Home Missionary Parliament, it has been borne in upon me in a way and with an energy not to be easily resisted, that the question of the relation of those who are possessed of large worldly means to such movements as the one in which we are now engaged of furnishing gospel facilities and diffusing gospel influences throughout the land, ought to be opened to the light and vigorously considered.

The theme, therefore, which has been chosen, or rather, which has chosen itself, for this occasion is:

THE OBLIGATIONS OF MEN OF WEALTH TO CHRISTIAN INTERESTS AND INSTITUTIONS IN OUR COUNTRY.

Proceeding at once to the discussion forecast in this announcement, I remark:

I. *It is to Christianity in its varied methods of application that we are to look for the regenerative and propulsive force which will take individuals, homes, communities, States in this land, as in all lands, forward in a true, moral advancement.*

This is why stress is laid on the obligation to Christian interests and Christian institutions. It is only through the fostering of Christian interests and the building up of Christian institutions and the creation of a dominant Christian sentiment that we can hope to save our country to freedom and virtue and order, and so saving it, to carry it on to the realization of the ideal of a nation whose God is the Lord. This is not a fact which has welcome in all quarters; but it is still a fact.

Shrink from it as disbelievers and angry opposers may, resist it, combine against it as they will, there is nothing but the gospel of Jesus Christ known to the world which can take bad men and make them good men; which can take hard, selfish men and make them unselfish and loving; which can turn currents of evil into currents of virtue; which can transform habitations of cruelty and lust into dwelling-places of sweetness and joy; which can overcome the indifference and prejudice and hate often cherished by large classes against holy things, and bring them over into glad loyalty to God; and which can work such radical and permanent changes in the character of individuals, in their views, tastes, habits, methods, desires, aspirations, that the whole commonwealth of which these individuals are the units, shall be elevated in the tone and sweep of its life.

Christianity touches a man vitally, and straightway he becomes finer, larger, broader. Christianity touches a home vitally, and it is as though a beam from heaven had come shining in to light up its hearthstone, or a snatch of some song the angels sing. Christianity touches a law vitally, and there is at once more justice and tenderness in it. Christianity touches trade and commerce vitally, and there is honesty in buying and selling. Christianity touches the factory and the mill vitally, and the products are what they are advertised to be—genuine articles. Christianity touches the trowel and the plane vitally, and the work of the workman is henceforth sound and thorough—as good at the center, where only God sees it, as at the surface where man sees it. Everything is changed for the better.

Paul says: "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature"; or, as some would render it, "there is a new creation"; "the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." On the ear of John there fell this other statement: "And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." That is the aim and function and outcome of Christianity—to make all things new—to make hearts new, lives new, homes new, literature new, customs, laws, economies, institutions new, and having begun to carry on the process of renewal, to continue it until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord.

What else is there than Christianity which will do this? Will art? Will science? Will education divorced from God and secularized into a mere matter of the here and now? Will libraries and galleries, even though planted in every city and village and town in the land, and made as accessible as possible to the people? Will popular newspapers and magazines? Will stock exchanges and boards of trade? Will white-winged or steam-driven ships? Will factories with their cunning looms and spindles? Will furnaces and forges aglow with flame? Will railroads and telegraphs and telephones, even though multiplied and improved indefinitely? Will any sort of discovery or invention? Will any reform organization—especially any reform organization which derives its impulse from sources other than the spirit and example of him who went about doing good, and is doing good evermore? Is there any drift, self-originating and self-sustaining, discoverable in the race, to which we can trust for the final emergence of mankind out of its present bondage to this worldliness into the light and liberty and sweetness and loyalty to truth of an ideal condition?

To ask is to answer these questions. Neither history nor observation leaves us in any doubt as to the correct reply. Pictures, books, schools, industry, busy traffic, great enterprises taken in hand and pushed on to a successful consummation, laws of nature freshly uncovered and utilized, reforms of one kind and another, even though they touch the evils against which they aim only on the surface—all these are good; for they are the direct fruits in many instances of Christianity itself; but they are not the instrumentalities through which souls are saved and States are saved.

Outside of Christianity and the influences set in motion by Christianity, there are no agencies at work in society, and no factors of progress on which

we can rely to bring men and communities of men into right adjustment with God.

This is a serious concern. For until men are right with God there can be little assurance that the masses of them will care much to be right with each other. Views of God and relations to God condition more things than are sometimes thought. Clear distinctions between right and wrong, sensitiveness to conscience, a disposition to be governed by high standards of duty, moral fiber and moral pluck, do not come by chance, nor through the influence of any sort of merely worldly training, but only as souls are brought into the focus of the light which falls in on the world from the face of God.

So, then, it is along this line—the line of the diffusion of Christian influences, the line of the propagation of Christian truths, the line of the building up of Christian institutions—Christian churches, Christian homes, Christian schools, Christian laws—the whole expressing itself at last in the precious fruitage of large and well-rounded Christian character—that the telling work must be done.

There may be men who say they do not accept Christianity, or that they do not sympathize with Christianity, and would prefer to see some sort of secularism come in and take place of faith in God. But this does not alter the case. Prejudices, and opinions born and nourished in the school of prejudices, are of little significance in comparison with the flaming demonstrations of history. Standing on the broad and sure platform of what experience teaches, it is as clear as daylight that thought and prayer and care and time and money in no niggard amount must go into expenditure in the direction of the various openings which are made and which can be made for Christian activity, if the pulse of the nation is to be kept beating in anything like unison with the heart-throbs of God. Without morality a nation rots into decay. Without a source and sanction in the living God, morality is only a rope of sand. Whatever else is done, or is not done, the nation goes up or down as it incarnates the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ in its thought and life. To let Christianity go, or to decide to become indifferent to Christianity, is to snatch a quill from the wing of fate and write the doom of the Republic.

II. *A second reason for insisting that men of wealth are under obligation to come to the aid of those who are doing their best to bring all nationalities and sections of this land into practical loyalty to the truth of Jesus Christ, is the difficulty and magnitude of the task to be accomplished.*

It is not an ordinary business which we have in hand—this of saving the nation in the length and breadth of it to righteousness. To take a people like ours, growing rapidly, made up so largely of different kindreds and tongues, and scattered over such a wide area, and lift them, in their thought and aim and custom and law and life, into recognition of God and fidelity to his will, is an undertaking to challenge the courage and tax the strength of every soul among us. Especially is this so under our present circumstances.

It would not be wise to take the tone of an alarmist in speaking of the con-

dition of things with which we are face to face; at the same time fidelity to facts will hardly permit us to say less than that we are in the midst of a state of affairs which calls for all the alertness, and all the wise forethought, and all the consecration, and all the marshaling of forces, and all the laying hold on the Everlasting Arm, of which we are capable.

Colonel Hammond used to say: "Chicago is always in an emergency." It is true; though the heroic handling of bomb-throwers by the police on the awful night of the Haymarket outbreak; and the verdict rendered by twelve men—good and true—at the close of the anarchist trial, and the results of a recent municipal election, seem to indicate that Chicago understands and means to meet the emergency with something of the old Runnymede spirit.

But it may be affirmed with just as much propriety that the whole country is all the time under the stress of some special exigency. We never get beyond what Goethe has called "the parting of the ways." Yesterday there was pressure upon us. There is pressure upon us to-day. There will be to-morrow and to-morrow.

Nobody need have any hesitancy in admitting that some things in our land are better than they were a hundred years ago, or fifty years ago, or twenty-five years ago, or even ten years ago, for that matter. But Optimism must not be blind. It will not do to fancy we can just dream ourselves over into the Good Times Coming. It may be doubted whether we have yet passed the Vicksburg and the Gettysburg which lie on the line of the bloody march to our Appomattox. There are clear, bright spaces to be seen; but for all that, it is not an unclouded sky into which we look.

So long as there are vast multitudes of our population for whom the church is responsible, who have yet no hope and are without God in the world; so long as there are towns and villages in our new settlements in which the institutions of the gospel have taken no permanent root, and towns and villages in our old settlements in which the institutions of the gospel are falling into decay; so long as there are millions of citizens living under the flag we all salute who have, so many of them, the right to vote, but who cannot read their ballots; so long as there are hundreds of thousands pouring in upon us every year from foreign shores who know nothing of our language and our customs, and our laws and our traditions and our aspirations, but who think of America as the wonderful land in which there is not only a free flowing of milk and honey, but license also for each man to do that which is "right in his own eyes," with none to molest or make him afraid; so long as there are whole sections within our free and broad domain, aspiring and intriguing to be States, with all the powers under the Constitution of independent commonwealths, in which the opinions and traditions of the old Spanish Jesuitism of three centuries ago still linger, or in which the "home" is constituted and managed as though it were pronounced "harem"; so long as there are slums in all our great cities in which the saloon and the brothel and the low gambling dive join hands in an unholy alliance to make life unsafe and to render decency and self-respect and thrift and moral growth im-

possible; so long as Capital and Labor, instead of seeing eye to eye and acknowledging their interdependence and mutual obligations, stand scowling at each other and threatening at any moment to involve society in the shock of a mad wrestle between greedy Monopoly and wild, unreasoning Nihilism; it is nothing less than a criminal blindness to the signs of the times, and a criminal misreading of duty, to imagine we have reached a point in the development of the moral life of the nation where we can fall back into serene confidence, and feel that the momentum already acquired and the forces already in operation will surely take us forward to a happy and triumphant issue. Not the folding of the hands, but the fresh girding of the loins; not a relaxing but a redoubling of energy in the name and power of the Highest is what the hour means. It is not to the merriment and glee and ringing laughter of a gay picnic that the providence of God invites us, but to a sharp and awful crusade against vice and crime and a thousand mischievous tendencies in belief and action.

Only so—by watchfulness, by wrestling conflict, by hot and aggressive warfare—can this beloved nation of ours, whose foundations were laid in prayer, and sacrifice and a reverent regard to posterity, and which has been baptized and re-baptized with tears, and consecrated by the blood of the bravest freely shed, be brought, in any good measure, into coincidence with that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Has any man, especially any man of influence, a right to exemption in this conflict? Is it not rather within the bounds of strictest truth to say that in view of the present posture of affairs—the obstacles which lie in the way, the evils and combinations of evil which oppose progress in righteousness, the demands pressing in on us from every quarter for the multiplication of agencies and influences which will conserve and elevate, and which can be put by only at the peril of everything wholesome and cohesive and promising in the future of our nation—there is not a man from ocean to ocean, not a man from lake to gulf, who if not bound to lend a hand, and to do all that in him lies, to check bad tendencies, to purge away iniquities, and to build the whole structure of our common life lightward and Godward? If there is anybody who may properly say: "This is not my work," surely it is not he who holds in his keeping just the kind of resource without which the planting and fostering of Christian institutions cannot be prosecuted.

III. *In the third place, men of wealth are under obligation to come forward with prompt and generous aid in support of Christian interests and institutions in this land, on the ground of moral indebtedness.*

According to any intelligent view of the equities, these men of wealth owe something for what they have come to possess. Unbraided and looked at from the standpoint of what seems to be fair and just, this indebtedness is found to be a cord of three strands:

1. *First of all, acknowledgments are due to God.*

It is a fit thing to feel a sense of dependence upon God and of accountableness to him for our joys and successes; and then it is a fit thing to express this

sense of dependence and accountableness in some sort of definite and material form.

In the olden time, and so long as the Chosen People were sensitive to the presence of God, and alive to the value of his benediction, the first fruits of the harvest, and the first fleeces of the flock, were turned over to the support of the ordinances and institutions of religion. Signal displays of divine grace, signal interpositions of God, were marked by the rearing of memorial stones, or celebrated in strains of immortal song. However much—mark this—however much their own industry and skill and forethought and courage may have contributed to the results over which they rejoiced, whatever may have been their own part in the achievements and triumphs which filled their hearts with gladness, these ancient worthies never failed to look through and see God in what had come to them—God in the issue of their toils, God in their victories, God in their gifts and mercies.

Why should it not be so now? Are not the faculties with which men work—are not the possibilities which are placed before them—are not the resources of raw material out of which fortunes are carved—all from God? Who has set the sun in the heavens? Who has arranged the round of the seasons? Who has put fertility into the soil? Who has taught the clouds how to distil their moisture of gentle rain and dew upon the thirsty earth? Who has filled the brooks and the rivers and the lakes and the seas with schools of fish? Who has peopled the air and the woodland with fowl? Who has instructed the seeds to swell into forests to furnish timber for ships and houses and stores and mills? Who has compacted the solid quarries of marble and granite? Who has enriched the veins of the rocks and the seams of the mountains with silver and gold, and filtered precious stones into the sand? Who has stored these vast underground reservoirs to overflow with their treasures of gas and oil? Who superintended and preserved these deposits of coal and iron and copper to which men dig down, and which have so much to do with business activity and the progress of civilization? Who compounded the waters which gush up in streams of refreshment and healing from our mineral springs? Who lodged in them the marvelous power and the serviceableness which our cunning scientists have found in drops of water and flashes of electricity and beams of light? Why not say at once—reverently and obedi ently—God?

Men may be indifferent to his claims, but no man may dispute him when God rises up and says: "Every beast of the forest is mine,and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fullness thereof."

It may seem old-fashioned to state it in this way—quite likely it does; but it is a profound conviction of mine that men who have been prospered in the world who have succeeded in their enterprises, owe God something, and something which can be repaid only by wise and liberal expenditures for the welfare of

God's children who are still here upon the earth. Every successful man becomes through God's goodness, debtor to humanity.

Unquestionably there are men who do not like to associate God with their gains, for every dollar is a tongue which torments them with the injustice and dishonesty which have marked every step of their career from poverty to wealth. But straight and clean men ought to be forward in acknowledging, in practical ways, their indebtedness to God for what they have; while men who have been hard, extortionate and reckless in their accumulations, gathering wherever they could without any regard to right and honor, would do well to read the story and follow the example of Zaccheus. Conversions of that kind are always in order.

2. *There is the indebtedness which grows out of the forethought and sacrifices of preceding generations.*

Why is it that the United States afford to-day the best opportunities to the largest numbers to be found in any land on the globe for the accumulation of wealth? Partly, no doubt, it is because of the vast and varied resources we possess. But is this the exhaustive answer? Are there not other countries whose climates are genial and stimulating, whose fields are broad, whose soils are fertile, whose rocks and sands and secret chambers are stored with precious substances, which yet hold out only small encouragement to investment and thrift?

Our country is what it is—a country pre-eminent among the nations of the earth, an open country, a free country, a liberty-loving country, a peace-and-order loving country, a country of intelligence and restless activity, and progress and boundless hopes—for the reason that those who have gone before us on these shores, and who have done most to dominate public opinion, have been men who were not only intent on making money but on elevating humanity, and who were at pains, often to the point of sharpest self-denial, to spread abroad knowledge by planting the institutions of knowledge, and to infuse, just as far as possible, the moral element into all our forms of thought and law and life.

Supposing the men and women, who from generation to generation for two hundred years and more, have been giving freely of their money, not a little of it hard-earned, to the building and supporting of church edifices, with a view, if possible, to putting a house of God and a man of God into every village and hamlet within our borders, and establishing the people in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ, had selfishly said: "We are too busy with our farms and our ships and our shops and our mills and our banks, to care for any of these things; look elsewhere for the help you seek;" supposing the men and women who, from generation to generation, for two hundred years and more, have been devoting a portion of the increase with which the Lord has blessed them to the founding and fostering of institutions of learning—Christian academies, and Christian seminaries, and Christian colleges—in our land, all the way from Maine to California, and from Michigan and Minnesota to Florida and Alabama, had selfishly said: "We care for none of these interests; our hearts are set on

material gains;" supposing, in fine, there had been no Christian church and no Christian school in America, and none of the influences pervading our civilization which emanate from the Christian church and the Christian school, would our modern millionaires have found the fields of industry and enterprise so fertile, and would it have been as easy for them to secure and hold vast possessions? Who can have any doubt about the answer? Not a man is there of ordinary intelligence and honesty within the bounds of the nation who can escape confessing that we have—all of us—been benefited in the way of opportunity, as well as in a thousand other ways, by the higher moral element which has been put into our common life, and by the orderly and progressive turn which has been given to the development of our American civilization by the wise forecasting and the self-denial and sacrifice of those who, going before, have counted it a joy as well as a duty to make provision for the mental and spiritual well-being of their successors in the great national heritage. The simple material gains derived by the men of to-day from the forecasting and the self-denial and sacrifices of the men of yesterday, are beyond estimate. No class experiences this advantage more signally than the very wealthy class. Is there any mathematics, is there any book-keeping, is there any trick of ledger by which our men of wealth can balance accounts without putting large amounts to the credit of the funds from which they have drawn so largely?

3. *There is a further measure of this moral indebtedness in view of the fact that many hands besides those which hold the properties have contributed to the erection of these immense fortunes.*

A few men own the great railroads of the continent; but who performed the labor and furnished the capital—not a little of it fleeced from the original and too-confiding stockholders by cunning financial manipulators—by which these railroads were built? A few men own the mines—iron, copper, coal, silver, gold—but whose toils and deprivations, again, make the working of these mines profitable? A few men monopolize the great interests of wheat and corn and pork and beef, and the vast profits of the cattle ranches and the produce farms go into their pockets; but is it fair that there should be all these receipts and no generous expenditures in behalf of those whose industry and economy and hard burden-bearing make these receipts possible?

It is so throughout. No man gathers in large gains without becoming debtor to many men and to many communities of men. In the moral equities of the case, the money kings of Boston and New York and Philadelphia and Baltimore and Chicago are under obligations to be helpers of their fellows, not only in their own cities, but in every State and Territory of the Union.

It matters not that nothing of this appears on the financial books of the parties concerned, that every laborer has been paid just what it was stipulated in the bond he should be paid, that every steer and every bushel of grain and every barrel of pork and every share of stock and every bond has been purchased at the market price, and that there are no claims for repudiated obligations or violated contracts which can be enforced in the courts against these few

into whose open hands such vast sums have rolled within a few years. Yet we are bound to feel that in the high court of the eternal justice—to say nothing of any sense of fraternity or any disposition to be helpful—the large numbers who bear the burdens of toil and daily hardship are not getting their full share of return as against the small number who accumulate so much and so rapidly.

May I suggest what, in my judgment, is the real source of alarm in the present socialistic agitation to those who want things to go on just as they have been going on through the ages in the economic world? It is not the cry that "property is theft." The right of private ownership is fundamental, and it cannot be overturned. It is not the wild and senseless land scheme of Henry George. That scheme hasn't the merit of being even a good bit of Utopianism. It is not the demand that excessive individualism shall be corrected by absorbing the individual into the mass. Individualism within due limitation, like the right of private ownership within due limitation, is a bed-rock principle, and society would make no headway without it. It is not the mob spirit even, which a few noisy demagogues who guzzle beer and talk and plot and organize mischief can stir up. Until things change decidedly for the worse, the State will be able to manage all this. The danger lies in the undefined, and, perhaps, undefinable, yet real, element of justice there is in the claim that there ought to be a more equitable distribution of the results of the combined efforts of those who plan and invest and of those whose function it is to use skill and muscle.

But all that needs to be said here and now, since it is all the occasion calls for, is that those who have leaped into possession of millions have not done it without incurring obligations to the classes and the communities which have been the contributing factors to the great enrichment.

Now these three considerations on which accent has been placed demonstrate, as it seems to me, very clearly the moral indebtedness we have been trying to show. At the same time, this does not exhaust the argument for indebtedness. Over and above any specific obligation which can be named, there is the large obligation which can be expressed only in the terms of what society, as a whole, does for a man. Every man who does anything to maintain order, to encourage thrift, to push forward worthy undertakings, is a direct aid to every other man who wins in the struggle. Laws enforced, moral order maintained, wise activity encouraged, put a successful man in debt to the community in which he lives. Into hands, therefore, which have brought so much it is only right that something beyond that which is measured out by our mere barter-and-sale scheme, should be put, to be taken back. On the ground of simple equity, as well as policy, men of wealth ought to be like the great oceans which take the streams into their bosoms only to send their waters up in clouds to float away and distil in fertilizing and refreshing moisture on the sources of supply.

IV. *But I pass on to say, in the fourth place, that men of wealth are under obligation to be generous helpers of those who are planning and laboring to keep this nation facing Godward and to establish it on the foundation of the righteousness of God, for the simple reason that they, like all other men, are bound to be serviceable, up to the full measure of their ability.*

Not having had occasion, in this discussion, to say it before, permit me to say it now, and once for all, that I have no ground of quarrel, and no disposition to find a ground of quarrel, against money-makers and money-holders, if only the making and the holding are in righteousness. On the contrary I gladly recognize both the moral legitimacy and the commanding dignity of many of the occupations by which riches are accumulated. Rightly gained and rightly used, money is a suitable and mighty instrument for the bringing about of beneficent ends. Wealth is one of the factors of civilization. We want it that we may make our homes, improve our farms, construct our railways, build and sail our ships, start our mills, establish our telegraphs, operate our mines, found and sustain schools, erect hospitals, publish books and papers and magazines, explore and develop new resources, reward industries, relieve the infirm and the poor and the orphaned, rear and secure enduring structures of art, encourage science, uphold liberty in its imperiled hours, support governments, foster virtue through restraining and reformatory societies, as well as that we may carry forward the specific business of organizing and sustaining Christian churches and Christian schools and bear the glorious gospel of the Son of God, in all the sweetness and power of it, to the remotest bounds of the earth. It is only a partial and unworthy view of the matter which leads men, whether in the pulpit or out of it, to declaim blindly against wealth and wealth-holders.

Some men, it is manifest enough, have no moral right to be money-gatherers. They have such endowments, mounting in instances to the lofty distinction of genius; such capacity for doing good in other and higher spheres, that an abandonment of themselves to any of the ordinary industries and trades for the sake of amassing a fortune, would be to pervert great faculties and to desecrate holy gifts. Men like Socrates and Plato and Moses and Isaiah and Paul and Luther and Columbus and Shakspere and Newton and Franklin and Whitney and Raphael and Mendelssohn and Agassiz, have their several missions mapped out for them in the special capabilities they have brought with them into the world; and from the work thus indicated and countersigned of God, they may not turn aside. There is loss and guilt in doing so.

Others there are whose eminent fitness is for business. They have the instinct of accumulation. Thrift is a part of their mother wit. They know when and where to plant dollars in order to get a good crop, just as an experienced farmer knows when and where to plant seeds. Their chief hope of moving and molding the world to its good, lies in their wonderful skill in developing and accumulating material resources. They make money legitimately, and society about them is benefited by their operations. No man has the moral right, at the expense of his mental and social and spiritual nature, to become wholly absorbed in money gains. But the right and the duty of certain men to be organizers of industry is beyond question.

But here falls in a principle from whose grip no human soul can escape. It is this: The man whose capacities are special owes a special service, and he owes this special service along the line and according to the fu'l measure of his special capacities.

The world did not ask John Milton to do the work of Paul; but it did demand, and it had a right to demand, that he should do his own work in his own grand way. We blame Byron not because, on the whole, he did not do some things well, but because he did not do the best he might. Columbus and Raphael could not have changed places; but how much poorer the subsequent generations would have been had not each wrought with a holy enthusiasm along the line of his own equipment of brain and heart and consecrated the fruits of his genius to mankind! Think of Dante or Wickliff or William of Orange, or Shakspere or Wren or Watt or Wellington, deliberately living within himself, and saying the world should have no share in the marvelous powers latent in his soul! What a crime it would have been in George Washington not to have laid his precious gifts of generalship and statesmanship on the altar of his country! Who can imagine what would have been just the condition of things in our land at this moment had there been no man like him to be "first in war, and first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen"! What a crime it would have been in General Grant to withhold his service in the hour of conflict, when he had the natural endowments and the military training to take the nation and lead it out unto assured victory, and cement the Union in bonds indissoluble!

Why is not the obligation just as binding on the man whose special and rare capability lies in the direction of material accumulation? Prophet, poet, painter, architect, orator, statesman, reformer, general, discoverer, inventor—we measure each of them by the power he has brought with him from God into existence, and we hold each of them to a severe responsibility for the best service he can render his country or his race. By what other code of ethics shall we judge the man whose genius is for financial affairs, and who can do in his sphere of business what artists and statesmen and generals and reformers do each of them in their sphere? We ask of the born commander what we never think of asking of the mere private. Are we not justified in standing in the presence of men of wealth and saying: "Your exceptional capacity to get is God's token of an exceptional obligation to give."

Recognizing and illustrating this obligation, in a practical way, would carry along with it many incidental advantages.

It would lend a grace and dignity, otherwise impossible, to the business of money-getting. Few things are more unseemly or more out of keeping with the native grandeur of the human soul than for a man just to plan and delve from beginning to end, to pile up and pile up and still to pile up dollars with no sanctifying aim in view. It is the purpose to make a right use of them which glorifies the accumulation of riches.

It would go far to hold in check the spirit of avarice and the pride of large possessions which have become so pronounced in our country in the last quarter of a century, and which threaten to do the same harm in undermining and corrupting our American character as they did in undermining and corrupting the ancient Roman character. Anything, otherwise good and wholesome, which will tend to curb the well-nigh universal haste to be rich, and to show men that money is not all, is of immense service.

There are two dangers. The leading one is that the desire of having, which is natural to man, and which, as has been said, under proper restraints is wholly lawful, and which as against all revolutionary ideas of property must be stoutly maintained, will swell into the lust of enormous fortunes, and that houses and lands and mills and mines and ships and roads will be sought for their own sakes, and not for the moral uses which are in them—sought in the miser spirit, or to augment power and gratify pride and further the projects of ambition.

The further danger is, that those of large means, feeling that they have kindred interests, will combine into huge monopolies, and wrest to their own exclusive enrichment opportunities which, by natural right, are free to all, and which ought to be kept open to all.

Precisely this is what we see to-day, and what we have been seeing for years now; men, on the one hand, giving themselves up, body and soul, to these instincts of accumulation, and toiling and tugging all the time to be millionaires, and, on the other hand, entering into money combinations which are not for the public weal, but which amount to what the people feel to be downright oppres sion and extortion.

In every aspect of it, such a drift in the popular thought and in the popular habit is bad. The influence of it is destructive to young men. It gives them wrong ideas of the relative value of things. When a man comes into this temper, and lays time and faculty and energy and skill and all he has of force and foresight upon the altar of Mammon, even though he succeed in heaping together large possessions, things get strangely turned about with him and to his immense disadvantage. No matter how broad such a man's acres may come to be, how many railroads he may have succeeded in wrecking and confiscating, how loud his mills thunder, how high the pile of his bonds and mortgages, how palatial his residences, and with what deference men salute him, he is not so much the owner as the thing owned. His possessions have him in their grip, and having him in their grip, in all probability they will hold him and squeeze him till the juices of life are all out of him.

It is no small service to correct all this, or to do what even tends to correct it. When men whose skill in accumulation is marked, and whose possessions are ample, come forward and lay down thousands and hundred of thousands of dollars to build up Christian churches where they are needed—whether amid the new and struggling settlements of the frontier, or on the outskirts, or in the slums of our great cities—or to aid Christian schools and colleges and seminaries in sections all ready for their molding touch, or to reconcile and save alien populations at home and abroad, they do more to displace the false notions about money into which eager and ambitious young men easily fall, and to preoccupy their minds with right views, both of money and of life, than it would be possible to do with all the homilies in the world.

This policy of general and generous giving by our men of wealth in quarters where the influence of their gifts would tend to broaden thought and purify life and develop moral fiber and make manhood and womanhood something nearer divine, has the further commendation that it would greatly lessen the gap be-

tween the rich and poor, and do not a little to reconcile the antagonisms which have sprung up in society and which seem to need something besides discussion and the enforcement of the law to hush them into harmlessness. This would not meet the specific demands of Knights of Labor and Trades Unions and socialistic agitators and "walking delegates" in general; but it would show conclusively that our new-fledged American aristocracy does not mean to repeat the folly and wickedness of the old Roman oligarchy, or the French oligarchy of the last century, and attempt to sever identity with the masses. This policy, widely and systematically pursued, would conciliate, in that it would speak louder than all words of a sense and purpose of brotherhood. Just so much of service would be worth a great deal to society at large.

But while there would be all these incidental advantages to flow from the practical recognition by men of wealth of the obligation to be serviceable in the most promising ways with their money, the great and commanding advantage would be the supply of the means necessary for pushing forward the Kingdom of God in our land, and advancing our institutions and our people in all the elements of truth and purity and righteousness. This is the supreme business of all men everywhere—getting God's Kingdom forward unto its consummation. It is the highest function of thought, and the crowning use to which skill and strength and experience and substance can be put—getting God's Kingdom forward unto its consummation. We stand highest, we front the stars most squarely, we are in closest sympathy with God, when all our endeavors and all the currents of our being are setting toward the divine event which filled the whole horizon of his thought when he prayed and taught his disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come." This highest and best work lingers through lack of means. Large gifts from rich men are the missing factors in working out the problem of our country's salvation and security. It is simply impossible to do the work and secure the results which would come, as inevitably as harvest follows seed-sowing, in our cities and villages, and in the valleys and along the mountain slopes of the frontier, for the simple reason that the material resources are not forthcoming. Wealth is kept back.

We have methods of doing work and securing results amply certified by long experience. We have organizations which have approved themselves over and over again to the sober judgment of good and wise men. Then we have something else; we have needs so multiplied and so varied, East and West, North and South, that it often makes the heart sick to pause and contemplate them. But the money—the money—the money with which to push forward, the money with which to occupy unoccupied places; the money with which to establish and secure and enlarge, the money with which to carry the truth as it is in Jesus into every nook and corner of this vast Republic—where shall we turn for that?

It is not because there is no money, that churches and schools and colleges and missions languish. Never was there so much money. In all our great cities and at all our fashionable watering-places, private residences and grounds are pointed out to us, which cannot stand for less than hundreds of thousands,

and often for not less than a million or more. Yachts go gliding in and out of our harbors, and along our sea-coasts, which cost their owners enough to buy out the endowments of a half-dozen Western colleges, and whose monthly expenditures through the gay summer time are enough to build two good, substantial churches in Dakota or Colorado. There are circles in which it is not an uncommon thing for a party to mean the drawing of a check for from $10,000 to $25,000. There is money enough. Money enough goes into idle extravagance and worse than useless, senseless luxury every year in all the leading cities of America, to keep a half-dozen Home Missionary Societies in active operation. The money is here for hoarding. It is here for promising investment. It is here for self-indulgence. It is here even for all sorts of vice.

The one simple, imperative demand is, that the purses which hold this money shall be opened—shall consent to be opened—that God and humanity may have some service rendered them. The hour has struck for the men of wealth among us to recognize the fact that God's providence has an unmistakable significance for them, and that they are to come to the front and take a more active and generous part, as a class, than ever before in fostering Christian interests and belting the continent with Christian institutions. Pre-eminently this is the work of the men of wealth. They may refuse to see it, ignore it, put it by; but if they do, it is at once at their own peril and the nation's peril.

In saying this it is not meant at all that those who are not rich shall withhold their hands from helping as the Lord hath prospered them. If our metropolitan ministers with their ample salaries and their delightful homes can do more, let them. If our average church-members can do more—and the most of them can—let them. If the widows who give the widow's mite, wish to keep on and to swell the ranks of those whose gifts are so precious and potent in the sight of our Lord, let them. If the poor Home Missionaries, with their wives, want to work harder, and to pinch closer, and give still more of their meager salaries to help things along, well, you may say, Let them, if you will, but—I will not!

But beyond all gainsaying, wealth owes service. There is no reason why any man who is working in a good Christian cause may not stand front to front with men of wealth, and on the ground of their common interests and their common obligations insist on a full measure of help. No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth unto himself. The sooner our very successful business men come into the spirit of this fact, and announce a readiness to do what in them lies to help those who are doing their best to save the children, to save the foreigners, to save the nation, and to keep civilization on the advance by bringing all classes and all nationalities and all communities within the Republic under the power of the righteousness of God, the better.

Already the roll of those who have given generously and whose benefactions are doing, and are still to do, untold good, is an encouraging one. Peabody, Otis, Stone, Slater, Marquand, Williston, Swett, Lenox, DePauw—what a glorious galaxy! Any heavens would be bright, lighted up by such stars. Prayer, personal intercourse, education, agitation, God's Spirit moving on human hearts, the creation of a public opinion which shall look this way and demand something generous of men of wealth, will swell the numbers; and by and by, it shall be written of rich men as of the Wise Men of old, that they opened their treasures and laid their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh at the feet of Jesus.